

98-84390-20

Kitchin, George William

The relation of trades
unions and co-operation

[London]

[1900?]

98-84390-20

MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

334	Kitchin, George, William, 1827-1912.
Z5	The relation of trades unions and co-operation
v 5	[London, 1900?]
	7 p. (Association of trade union officials,
	no. 2) 21 cm.
	Vol. of Pamphlets

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mmREDUCTION RATIO: 11:1IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIBDATE FILMED: 4-6-98INITIALS: AMTRACKING #: 32591

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

... The ...

Association of Trade Union Officials.

THE RELATION OF TRADES UNIONS AND CO-OPERATION.

BY

THE VERY REV. G. W. KITCHIN, D.D.,

Dean of Durham.

THE half-century now past has seen the firm consolidation of two strong powers in the working world—Trades Unions and Co-operation. Are these vigorous contemporaries rivals? Or are they fellow-workers for good? How far do they move on the same lines? Is their action wholesome and at one in aim and end?

Great phenomena like these should be thoughtfully and frankly discussed, their respective places fixed, their tendencies noted. If we can understand and appreciate these wide-spread movements, we may be able to forecast something of the probable development of labour in the century now beginning.

It is a comfort to be able to think that, while foreign Governments, in their panic against Socialism, hampered by traditions ancient and bad, are suspicious of the working-man and hostile to his developments, England is at any rate neutral, sometimes even friendly towards his efforts. Our greater freedom of labour should spur us to use our opportunities well and to secure our advantages. Many, even in England, are on the look out for blunders, and try to scare the timid shopkeeping classes with awful descriptions of the lawlessness and the idleness of the working-man. At the present time, the chief hostility is against

the spread and thoroughness of education; they seem to think that an intelligent and educated man is a danger. They try to scare him by the threat that education will cost him the price of a pint of beer.

It is fortunate that, in the presence of these dangers, the true interests of both Trades Unions and of the Co-operative Societies are harmonious, and there is no danger of those jealousies on which the meaner of mankind love to play.

For the true object of both bodies is the same: It is the winning for those who create wealth of a fair share of the results of their labour. The old division between Capital and Labour, with knowledge and intelligence strictly limited to the Capital side, is being rapidly broken down; and the advance of education and of opportunity will secure the proper distribution of both capital and intelligence among the armies of Labour.

People may be tempted to say that the aims of the two are not the same; and that while Co-operation may have this aim in view, the Trades Unions are nothing more than a fighting organisation to hamper the development of trade, for the selfish comfort of the hands. But this is just like the bad blunder always being made by historians. They fill their books with disastrous records of wars and battles, and pay no attention to popular growth, nor do they record the triumphs of the thinking and civilised life of communities. The destructive work is so picturesque; the real victories of man over his lower nature are despised.

Yet we know that the fighting element in Trades Unionism is, by comparison, but a small part of their work. The constructive work, though silent and uneventful, is their main business. Out of thirteen and a-half millions of pounds laid out by them during the last nine years, six-tenths were given to their Friendly Society benefits, while only about two-and-a-half-tenths were expended on strikes and lock-outs: that is, over eight millions went to benefit work, and two millions and a-half to fighting, the remainder to the necessary cost of organisation. In other words, sixty per centum were for benefit work, about twenty per centum went to the wars.

For Trades Unions exist for protection against mishap, against grasping by Capital, against failing health, against accidents, against unsanitary homes. They are the champions of the working classes, and, as Italy said she "*farà da sé*," so will they work out their own salvation. To soften the shock of fate

and equalise the conditions of misfortune, to protect against the over-bearing claims of shareholders and the greed of wealth—these are noble tasks. The Unions are fully worthy of Seneca's splendid saying, as he described a great character, "He was a man so great that he was *the stay of fate*." For in human life Fate is only the operation of known, if apparently irresistible, forces bearing down on some defenceless mortal; and heroic characters do sometimes seem to stand up against and to stay the will of the dread Goddesses of Fate. A noble nature will influence the spinning of the thread of life, working into it threads of stronger texture—golden, eternal strands. Yes! Education herself watches over the growth of that thread, and "the first daughter of Night" obeys the force of knowledge, and gives a better life, which we may use to our advantage, and stand fearless in God's sight till the Fate, "with the abhorred shears," cuts our thread of life. For this has been our contribution to the web and woof of human life, and we can leave it thankfully to our children better and stronger and purer than it was when we began.

It is clear, then, that the main work of the Trades Unions is to stay the course of accident or ill-health, so trying to make life run more smoothly, and in so doing also to bind up the broken hearted and give comfort to the afflicted. This is nobler than the heroic efforts—the strikes, with irritation and loss of real strength, with suffering to the children and the house-mother, and with pitiful waste of hard-earned substance, and back-setting of opportunities.

The main work of the Co-operators is a note of Advance, while that of the Unions is Defence. Healthy organisation is their aim, and the education of their best to a level on which they may live in light, transact business, and guide the working world. Here we step into a land of ideals. Co-operators are always among the "forwards," because they discern that, certain barriers broken down and difficulties smoothed away, the path will be opened into a new Utopia, a favoured blossoming land, in which the irritation of the past unhealthy competition will give place to peace; where all wage questions will be automatically solved, because justice and brotherhood are brightening the morning land of honest toil. They may not attain to their ideals; it is a great point gained that they even see them, and struggle for them. In this is a great advance.

The Unionists stiffen labour and strengthen it for the rough and tumble of life; the Co-operators are for educating the people towards a higher level and a better scale of home life. The two should forge the leaders of the coming time. They should make them resolute and prudent, and wise to rule. The Unionists are for improving the position of men under their employers. The Co-operators want, in the end, to do without, first, middlemen—the most wasteful part of our commercial life—and next to do without masters, by supplying a well-trained and active brain power and genuine knowledge in the leaders of their productive work.

The key to success lies here, and also in the importance of the possession of the implements of labour. Much of the modern distress and confusion of the working world springs from the fact that employers have seized on, and have deprived the labourers of, the whole plant of labour, from a spade up to a manufactory with a thousand engines. This is really the crucial difference between modern and ancient labour. The man has lost all his instruments of labour, and is threatened with the loss of nine-tenths of his intelligence. To such things has the boasted "division of labour" brought us. The big factories, the costly machines, the steam or electric power—the usufruct of many inventions—all these are seized by Capital using intelligence; and the working-man grows more helpless daily, his work more monotonous, his rôle that of a living machine, doomed to create some uninteresting fragment of a whole product which he can never hope to see in the completion of it.

Here and there, a benign master or a shrewd and alarmed body of shareholders have tried to remove the threatening form of the strike power by bribing the men into contentment, by some share of profits, even of administration. This has been successful in some of the monopolist industries. This help must be partial, and must be paid for by some loss of independence.

It is only by the close alliance of the Unionists and the Co-operators (and there is nothing to forbid hearty coalition between them) that healthy advance can be made. Unionists must give strength, Co-operators contribute practical knowledge of business.

We need, especially, qualities now much obscured in England. First, truthfulness and the commercial interpretation of it in honesty; that is, we need sound work and true, done by a hand

guided by a quick brain and a correct eye. We need, almost more than this, that divine quality of generosity, which will give to Labour a happy humane character, and will make our workplaces a land of love and mutual respect. It will be fatal if rivalries are allowed to spring up between man and man, between town and town. Jealous feelings make it hard, if not impossible, for even the ablest men to take command and direction over their brethren—their fellow-workers. Yet far-spreading businesses, with far-reaching commercial relations, must have such men at their head. Till the lack of self-control and of business training is supplied, Co-operative ventures will never reap their full success.

Truth, brotherhood, knowledge, these are our first needs. The stimulus of difficult times will bring these forth. If men will be patient and faithful there will grow up among them plenty of intelligence, and well-directed industry will win the right reward. It is hard to learn through disappointment and loss. "Learn by suffering," said the old Greek poet. No good result comes of easy work. Who cares for the sailor who can only sail on a smooth sea, with a favouring breeze? It is the fight to windward that tests qualities of the ship, the handiness of the crew, the strength of the captain. Nor is there anything more exhilarating than this fighting against a rough sea and a head wind. The harbour rest is tenfold more tranquil after a fierce struggle and a fairly won victory.

This is also true of the vital question now exercising the Unions as to Labour representation in Parliament, on the Councils, as well as on the managing boards of great commercial undertakings. The hands are awake to the truth that, as the saying goes, "He that pays calls the tune." We are all asking whether the millions who must pay for the mistakes of their rulers will never be allowed to raise a voice of protest, or even to whisper a word of advice.

Still, these are days not only of ideals but of hopes. The efforts of constructive work spread fast, and are covering the surface of the land. In 1889 there were but 59 Productive Co-operative Societies in England and Scotland. In 1899 the number had risen to 132—more than doubling the ventures in a decade of years. The Irish dairy societies, now almost innumerable, have all sprung into being in the same period.

As one contemplates this vigorous movement one feels the difference between the two forms of working-men's progress.

They attack their problem from different sides. The Trades Unions seem by far the more practical of the two: they meet daily needs, they succour daily calamities, they protect the labourers' rights. The Co-operative Societies move on side by side: they give the worker the means of making his scanty store go further, and they open before him a new world of interests and opportunities. Both are eager to make the home happier; both feel the pressure of the housing problem; both aim at a life freed from the worst cares of a crushing social system. The Trades Unionist has to be prudent over strikes, and enters on them always with a very sore heart. Apart from inevitable pinching and suffering, he knows that a battle engaged over a falling market must lead to disaster. On the other hand, the Co-operator must face the risks of business, and look out for catastrophes in the ebb and flow of the nation's prosperity. He is anxious because of possible failures in management; because of the lack of buying skill; because of the incalculable waywardness of the customer.

Yet, in spite of all these risks, both grow bravely; and their effects on the well-being of the country are already felt. They raise the scale of living; they protect themselves against unfair dealing and oppression.

Both look for a new distribution of the wealth of the land. They must join hands if they would arrive at the solution of the housing difficulty and the readjustment of the holding of land. In other words, there is before them a great reform of English social life in town and in country. Glad should I be could we see the fulfilment of Prince Kropotkin's earnest desire—the desire that the workers should have each their house in the fresh air of the country, with a bit of land for him to cultivate, that so the labouring man might have the solace of healthy and pleasant surroundings, and a home which brings back something of the old world, in which he may have the rational joy of seeing his family growing up in healthy, God-fearing peace. Much, of course, must depend on self-control, on directness of aim, and the high principles of the breadwinner; much on their better education and the power of applying well the wealth which will fall to their share.

We are all, more or less, swayed by interests; and all is well if those interests are honest and pure. It is not money seeking or dividend hunting that will make our prosperity. Who follows

these shall find failure and oppression dogging his steps. We shall become sweaters also, grinding the faces of our brethren. We shall follow that cursed doctrine of "buy in the cheapest, sell in the dearest market." We shall wink at adulteration, and chuckle if we get a price above the real worth of our goods. The fascination of the dividend is the great snare of the Co-operator; the risks of angry opposition, the dark fighting spirit, are the dangers of the Trades Unions. Let us be peaceable and large minded; let us cultivate a broad toleration towards our neighbours.

Above all, a wide horizon opens out itself for us. We grow aware that nobler things are within our reach. We shall amend present conditions till they no longer block the way of self-improvement and advance.

Then, maybe, we shall once more see a "merry England," the home of our dreams, growing up around us. Ours will be a patriotic England, a land we love and defend by just dealing and scorn of pettiness; the land which has begotten a splendid progeny of literature, and may even yet endow the world with works of genius in art and skill. It will be an age in which we are far above the ancient stimulus of competition, the mean things of cheating, the vulgar greed of gain, the immoral gambling for wealth or self-indulgence. We shall scorn the satanic doctrine of "The devil take the hindmost." Nay, in the end we shall understand, and rejoice to live up to, the inspired words of that veritable prophet of the people, John Ruskin, when he set himself, for the sake of the toilers, to interpret afresh for us the divine words of Christ,

"UNTIL THIS LAST EVEN AS UNTO THEE."

THE ASSOCIATION OF TRADE UNION OFFICIALS.

"Association is the law of Progress."

EXTRACT FROM RULES.

OBJECTS.

The Objects of the Association shall be—

- (A) To promote and facilitate the interchange of information, ideas and practice on all matters pertaining to Trades Unionism.
- (B) To watch over and protect the mutual interests, and to provide facilities for promoting and maintaining professionally and socially a spirit of fraternity amongst the Members of the Association.
- (C) To invite from the Members, and others, communications, written or oral, relating to the working and management of Trade Unions, and on technical, social, industrial, and economic questions affecting the working classes, which may tend to elevate and improve the knowledge of the Members, and to hear and discuss such communications at the Meetings of the Association.
- (D) To print and publish, sell, lend and distribute any communications, lectures, essays, or reports of the proceedings and transactions of the Association, or any similar body; and to purchase, reproduce, print and publish any other books, papers, treatises or communications, which may be of interest and advantage to the Association.
- (E) To collect all possible information on Labour matters, such as the reports and publications of Trade Unions, and all standard works bearing upon Trades Unionism generally, and to afford the Members the privileges and advantages of having a meeting place.
- (F) To afford assistance, make donations or allowances to deserving Members of the Association and their families, and the families of deceased Members.
- (G) To do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objects.

MEMBERSHIP.

The Association shall consist of Members and Honorary Members.

MEMBERS.

Members shall be permanent paid officials of a Trade Union, and such other officers whose income is not wholly derived from their official position.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

Honorary Members shall be persons who have rendered service to and are in expressed sympathy with the Trade Union Movement.

ENTRANCE FEES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Every Member shall pay an entrance fee of *Five Shillings* and a subscription of *Half-a-Guinea* per annum.

Honorary Members shall pay a subscription of *Half-a-Guinea* per annum.

19, BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

END OF
TITLE